

Don't miss the best in Scripture!

by Graham Thomason. Published on www.FarAboveAll.com

We assume you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and so know something of the grace of God by which you have eternal life and forgiveness of sins. But do you know what other blessings are revealed in Scripture? And to whom they are addressed?

Before Acts 28:28, we have *the hope of Israel* (Acts 28:20) in view. From early in Genesis (Gen 12:3), the seed of Abraham was announced as the channel of blessing for the nations at large. The seed follows through Isaac (Gen 26:4) and Jacob (Gen 28:14), from whom the whole nation of Israel are descended, as is Christ. We also see blessings with Abraham or Israel in the New Testament. It is a great thing to be blessed with Israel, grafted into the olive tree and to partake of their fatness (Rom 11:17), but what happens at Acts 28:28? Israel as a channel of blessing gets temporarily¹ cut off! However, *the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles* (Acts 28:28). Not that Jews are excluded, but they don't have their national privileges at the moment. They will have them again one day. The big question now is: of the epistles of Paul (the apostle of the Gentiles²), which ones come before Acts 28:28 and which, if any, come after? We propose that some are set in the Post-Acts-28 period and reveal something very new and special:

Before Acts 28:28

Israel and the new covenant made with it (Jer 31:31) in view; angels; believers are a bride; imminent 'coming' (παρουσία) of the Lord; Paul a free man.

- **Romans:** 1:16, 2:9, 2:10 *to the Jew first*; 11:17 *Gentiles grafted in.*
- **1 Corinthians:** 1:24 *both Jews and Greeks.* 11:25 *New covenant.*
- **2 Corinthians:** 11:2 *believers presented as a chaste virgin to Christ* (contrast Eph 4:13).
- **Galatians:** 3:14 *the blessing of Abraham...upon the Gentiles.*
- **1 Thessalonians:** 2:19, 3:13 *the coming of the Lord.*
- **2 Thessalonians:** 2:8 *brightness of His coming.*
- **Hebrews:** *To the Hebrews*; 12 references to angels.

After Acts 28:28

Gentiles prominent; Paul a prisoner; something new made known (the 'mystery'); 'appearing' (ἐπιφάνεια) replaces 'coming'; all spiritual blessings, (but physical healing not guaranteed).

- **Ephesians:** 3:3-3:5 *the mystery... in other ages not made known*; 4:13 *till we all come ... unto a perfect man (or husband) – contrast 2 Cor 11:2; 6:20 bonds (or: a chain).*
- **Philippians:** 1:7 1:13 1:14 *bonds*; 2:25-2:26 *Epaphroditus ... sick*; 3:11 *out-resurrection*; 3:14 *prize of the high calling.*
- **Colossians:** 1:26 *mystery, hid from ages and generations*; 4:18 *bonds.*
- **1 Timothy:** 5:23 *infirmities* (Mark 16:8-20 was fulfilled in Acts); 6:14 *appearing.*
- **2 Timothy:** (at the end of Paul's ministry) 4:20 *Trophimus sick*; 1:10, 4:1, 4:8 *appearing.*
- **Titus:** 2:13 *appearing.*
- **Philemon:** 1:1, 1:9 *prisoner, aged*; 1:10 *bonds.*

This exciting new dispensation of the mystery is revealed after Acts 28:28. It is Gentile-oriented, and we are told that we are seated with Christ (Eph 2:6), Who is located at God's right hand (Eph 1:20) far above all principality and power ... (Eph 1:21)! Wow!

¹ Israel is restored again one day. Hosea 1:10, Hosea 6:1-6:3; Zech 13:9

² Apostle of the Gentiles in Rom 11:13, Rom 15:16, Gal 2:2, Eph 2:1, 2 Tim 1:11